

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 239633

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 28387 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ANKARA ATHENS BONN
BRUSSELS COPENHAGEN DUBLIN THE HAGUE LONDON LISBON LUXEMBOURG MADRID
MOSCOW OSLO OTTAWA REYKJAVIK ROME NATO USNMR SHAPE BERLIN USBERLIN
PRAGUE BUCHAREST BUDAPEST BELGRADE WARSAW BORDEAUX LYON MARSEILLE
NICE STRASBOURG SEP 29.

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 28387

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, R
SUBJECT: TENTATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE NEAR BREAK-UP
OF THE LEFT

REF: PARIS 27815

SUMMARY. THE FAILURE OF THE TWO LEFT SUMMITS IN THE
PAST TWO WEEKS IS IN ONE RESPECT THE PRICE THE PS IS
PAYING FOR ITS STUNNING ELECTORAL SUCCESS OVER THE PAST
FIVE YEARS. THAT SUCCESS HAS REVERSED THE BALANCE OF
FORCES WITHIN THE LEFT AND DESTROYED THE EQUILIBRIUM TO
A POINT WHICH THE PCF APPARENTLY FINDS INTOLERABLE.
THE PCF HAS SOUGHT TO COMPENSATE BY NEGOTIATING THROUGH
NATIONALIZATIONS AN ADJUSTMENT OF ITS POSITION IN THE
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LEFT. IT HAS LAUNCHED A MASSIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN TO
JUSTIFY ITS POSITION AND LAY THE BLAME FOR THE BREAK-
DOWN IN THE TALKS SQUARELY ON THE PS. THE PS, WHICH
COULD ALMOST TASTE VICTORY NEXT MARCH, IS SUFFERING
FROM A COMBINATION OF DISCOURAGEMENT AND DISBELIEF BUT
IS WAITING PATIENTLY UNTIL QUIET CONTACTS AMONG THE PAR-
TIES REVEAL WHETHER A COMPROMISE AND A NEW SUMMIT ARE
POSSIBLE. MOST OBSERVERS WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF
THESE CONTACTS CONTINUE FOR WEEKS BEFORE THE PARTIES
DECIDE WHETHER TO TRY TO RELAUNCH THE DYNAMIC OF THE

COMMON PROGRAM OR LIMIT THEMSELVES TO AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE. IN THE MEANTIME, SOME CENTRISTS -- BUT NOT GISCARD'S PEOPLE -- HAVE ISSUED SIREN CALLS FOR THE PS TO JOIN FORCES, BUT MITTERRAND AND OTHER PS LEADERS HAVE REPEATEDLY REJECTED ANY POSSIBILITY OF AN ALLIANCE WITH PARTIES IN THE MAJORITY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MORNING AFTER: POLITICAL OBSERVERS ARE SEARCHING FOR A CONCLUSIVE EXPLANATION OF WHY THE PCF PUSHED NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PS AND MRG PRACTICALLY TO THE BREAKING POINT LAST FRIDAY. NONE THAT WE HAVE READ OR HEARD IS COMPLETELY CONVINCING. INDEED THE REAL STORY OF PCF LEADER MARCHAIS' AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S STRATEGY MAY NOT BE KNOWN FOR A LONG TIME. MOST LIKELY, IN OUR OPINION, THE REASONS FOR DIGGING IN ON NATIONALIZATIONS WERE INTERNAL TO THE PARTY, TO ITS ROLE IN A LEFT GOVERNMENT AND IN FRANCE IN THE PRESENT MIXED CONTEXT OF A PERIOD OF DETENTE. ANDRE FONTAINE ANALYZED AT LENGTH IN LE MONDE THE ROLE OF THE LONG ARM OF MOSCOW BUT DISCOUNTED THE POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT SOVIET PRESURES. HE NEVERTHELESS THOUGHT SOVIET VIEWS WERE LIKELY TO HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON SOME ELEMENTS OF THE PCF AND COULD HAVE AN INDIRECT INFLUENCE ON PCF DECISIONS. CONFIDENTIAL

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CERTAINLY SOVIET INFLUENCE CANNOT BE EXCLUDED (ANOTHER POPULAR VERSION ATTRIBUTES GISCARD'S CRITICAL INTERVIEW IN NEWSWEEK ON HUMAN RIGHTS AS THE DEAL HE STRUCK FOR BREZHNEV'S FAVORING THE STATUS QUO IN FRANCE), BUT EVEN IF IT DOES EXIST, IT SEEMS TO US SECONDARY. A COROLLARY TO THIS THEORY IS THAT MARCHAIS IS BITTERLY CONTESTED BY THE OLD GUARD IN THE PARTY, BY SOME LEADERS OF THE CGT AND BY CERTAIN COMMUNIST INTELLECTUALS AND THAT HE WAS FORCED TO STIFFEN HIS POSITION TO PROTECT HIS OWN LEADERSHIP AND THE UNITY OF THE PARTY. THESE ELEMENTS OF THE PARTY MAY WELL HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY APPARENT SOVIET RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH THE PS. OTHERS PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON THE IMPACT OF FRENCH ECONOMIC PROBLEMS: SOME OBSERVERS SEE A WORSENING OF THE SITUATION, WHICH IF TRUE, COULD ENCOURAGE THE PCF TO SIT BACK AND WAIT RATHER THAN TRY TO "MANAGE THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM" WITH HALF-WAY SOCIALIST PROGRAMS. PART OF THE PROBLEM IN TRYING TO EXPLAIN THE PCF'S HARD-LINE OF SEPTEMBER 22-23 IS THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT REPRESENTS A SUDDEN CHANGE, OR EVEN A CHANGE STRETCHED OVER THE LAST TWO MONTHS' POLEMIC BETWEEN IT AND THE PS. WHILE THE PCF HAS FAITHFULLY SUPPORTED PS CANDIDATES OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS, MOST NOTABLY IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1974 BUT ALSO THE 1973 LEGISLATIVES, 1976 CANTONALS, 1977 MUNICIPALS AND NUMEROUS BY-ELECTIONS AND LOCAL CONTESTS, A GOOD CASE CAN BE MADE THAT, DESPITE ITS REMONSTRATIONS TO THE

CONTRARY, THE PCF GRADUALLY CAME TO THE CONCLUSION IT WAS GETTING LESS AND LESS FROM THE UNION OF THE LEFT VIS-A-VIS THE PS.

2. NOT WHETHER, BUT AT WHAT PRICE: THE REAL QUESTION MAY NOT BE WHETHER THE PCF WANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A LEFT GOVERNMENT AND THEREFORE WANTS A COMMON PROGRAM, BUT RATHER, AT WHAT PRICE THE PCF IS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE AS A JUNIOR PARTNER AND WHAT GUARANTEES IT WILL CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE REGARDING THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM. FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW, THE BALANCE OF POWER WITHIN THE LEFT IN FAVOR OF THE PS HAS PERHAPS REACHED THE BREAKING POINT. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SHOCK FOR THE PCF OF HAVING FALLEN FROM THE CLEARLY DOMINANT POSITION WHEN THE COMMON PROGRAM WAS SIGNED IN 1972 TO ONE WHERE IT REPRESENTS LESS THAN 40 PERCENT OF THE LEFT HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL. HAVING BY FAR THE BETTER PARTY ORGANIZATION AND UNION SUPPORT, THE PCF COULD TOLERATE A DEAD HEAT (21.3 PERCENT TO 20.6 PERCENT) WITH THE PS IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE 1973 LEGISLATIVES. AND FOR THAT REASON, IT LENT ITS FULL SUPPORT TO MITTERRAND AS THE JOINT LEFT CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT IN 1974. BUT WHEN IT LOST GROUND TO THE PS IN NEARLY EVERY ONE OF THE SIX BY-ELECTIONS IN THE FALL OF 1974, IT FELT COMPELLED TO REACT -- AND IT DID SO WITH A VIOLENCE NOT MATCHED UNTIL AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER OF THIS YEAR. THE FACT THAT LAST MARCH'S MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS GAVE THE PCF ENTRY INTO PRACTICALLY EVERY LEFT MUNICIPALITY IN FRANCE MAY HAVE BEEN A RE-TRAINING FORCE ON THE PCF IN THE EARLIER PART OF THE YEAR, SO THAT CONCERN WITH THE BALANCE OF LEFT FORCES COULD BE SUBORDINATED FOR A TIME TO THE ELECTORAL ADVANTAGES OF THE UNION.

3. DESPITE THE WINDFALL OF THE MUNICIPALS, THE PCF MUST BE CLEARLY CONSCIOUS OF THE WIDENING GAP DEVELOPING BETWEEN IT AND THE PS IN VOTER SUPPORT. IN 1973 IT COULD RATIONALIZE THAT IT WAS BENEFITTING FROM PS SUPPORT, EVEN IF THE PS BENEFITTED MORE, PROPORTIONALLY. SUCH WAS NO LONGER THE CASE AFTER 1974, WHEN MITTERRAND LOST THE PRESIDENCY BY LESS THAN ONE PERCENT AND WENT ON TO CONSOLIDATE THE PS AT ITS ASSIZES AS THE LARGEST PARTY IN FRANCE. THERE IS SOME DEBATE OVER WHETHER THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PS HAS BEEN LEVELING OFF AT AROUND 30 PERCENT OVER THE LAST YEAR. BUT THERE IS LESS DEBATE THAT THE PCF HAS DIPPED (SLIGHTLY) OVER A LONGER PERIOD TO ITS PRESENT 19-20 PERCENT. THE CAPITAL POINT FOR THE PCF IS THAT IT

SAW THE HISTORICAL ELECTORAL TREND CONFIRMED, WITHOUT SEEING ANY WAY TO REVERSE IT. MITTERRAND'S DILEMMA WAS HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL, BUT NOT SO SUCCESSFUL AS TO BREAK THE UNION. IN A 1972 SPEECH WHICH WAS NOT TAKEN TOO SERIOUSLY AT THE TIME BY THE PCF, MITTERRAND SAID 3 OF THE 5 MILLION PCF VOTERS WOULD LIKE TO VOTE SOCIALIST, IF A REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE WERE OFFERED TO THEM. AND MORE RECENTLY, PS LEADERS, AGAIN REPEATING THEIR MISTAKES OF OVERCONFIDENCE, TALKED ABOUT DRIVING THE PCF DOWN TO 15 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. THIS INTERNECINE COMPETITION WITH ITS PRINCIPAL PARTNER EXPLAINS THE PCF'S CAMPAIGNS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS: FOR NEW MEMBERSHIP, THE CHRISTIAN VOTE, THE FRENCH VERSION OF A HISTORIC COMPROMISE (UNION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE), AND OLIVE BRANCHES TO OPPOSITE GAULLISTS, EMIGRES, PENSIONERS AND EVEN THE LEFT RADICALS (MRG). BY AND LARGE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PCF MEMBERSHIP DRIVE, IT HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN THESE EFFORTS.

4. THE ECONOMY AND NATIONALIZATIONS: BUT ELECTORAL CONCERNS WERE NOT THE ONLY CONSIDERATION IN THE PCF STRATEGY. INDEED, IT WAS OBLIGED TO COUNT ON OTHER ASSETS SINCE ITS ELECTORAL STRATEGY WAS NO LONGER WORKING. ONE OF ITS PRINCIPAL ASSETS WAS SUPPORT BY THE CGT AND ITS DOMINANT POSITION IN CERTAIN NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES (GAS AND ELECTRICITY). IF PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT WAS ONLY A MEANS FOR THE PCF TO AN END OF CONTROL OF THE STATE, ANOTHER MEANS (AND PERHAPS A MORE REAL FORM OF POWER) WAS CONTROL OVER KEY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY. THUS THE INSISTENCE ON THE NATIONALIZATION OF 1450 AFFILIATES (NOW 729) OF THE GROUPS NAMED IN THE COMMON PROGRAM. IN FACT THE MORE THE PCF LOST CONFIDENTIAL

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GROUND TO THE PS IN THE ELECTORAL COMPETITION, THE MORE IMPERATIVE IT BECAME TO WIN OVER OTHER LEVERS OF POWER, E.G., THROUGH CONTROL OF BOTH THE MANAGEMENT AND THE WORKER LEVEL OF NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES. IF THERE WAS ANY AREA WHERE THE PCF RAGED OVER PS AMBITIONS AND INTENTIONS AS MUCH AS IN THE ELECTORAL FIELD, IT WAS OVER PS EFFORTS SINCE 1975 TO ORGANIZE PARTY UNITS IN PLANTS AND FACTORIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE PS EFFORT TO DATE IS STILL VERY MODEST COMPARED TO THE PCF (1,000 VERSUS 9,000), BUT THE PCF REACTED AS IF ANY INCURSIONS ON ITS PRESERVES WERE INTOLERABLE. IT IS THEREFORE NOT SURPRISING THAT THE PCF PROVED MOST INTRACTABLE ON THE PORTIONS OF THE COMMON PROGRAM DEALING WITH THESE "LEVERS" -- NATIONALIZATIONS AND THE ROLE OF WORKERS AND UNIONS IN THE NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES.

5. REACTION IN THE PS: WE ARE STRUCK BY THE DISCOURAGEMENT AND SELF-SEARCHING NOW GOING ON IN THE PS.

WITH MEMORIES OF THE SUCCESSFUL 1972 NEGOTIATIONS STILL FRESH IN MIND, ONE NATIONAL SECRETARY TOLD US THE DAY THE TALKS BROKE DOWN THAT HE AND MOST OF THE PS LEADERS WERE CONFIDENT OF AN AGREEMENT. WHY? BECAUSE THE PCF PRESUMABLY HAD NO CHOICE. IT COULD ONLY MAINTAIN ITS 19-20 PERCENT OF THE VOTE BY STAYING IN THE UNION AND BECOMING MORE REFORMIST. IF IT BROKE, IT WOULD RETREAT TO ITS FORMER GHETTO AND SHRINK EVEN FASTER. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE PS WAS SET UP FOR THE BREAK-DOWN OF THE TALKS, FOR THE PCF HAS NEVER STOPPED ITS VERBAL CAMPAIGN FOR UNION AND A DEFINITIVE AGREEMENT. AFTER ROBERT FABRE AND THE MRG WALKED OUT OF THE SEPTEMBER 14 SUMMIT, IT WAS THE PCF, NOT THE PS, WHICH DECLARED ITSELF READY TO RESUME THE NEXT DAY. NOW, ACCORDING TO ONE PARTY OFFICIAL, "THE PS IS DIVIDED INTO CONFIDENTIAL

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PESSIMISTS AND THOSE WHO JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT -- AND MITTERRAND FALLS INTO THE FORMER CATEGORY." THE CERES LEFT WING, WHICH COULD BE EXPECTED TO POINT ITS FINGER AT MITTERRAND FOR NOT FOLLOWING ITS "UNITARY" LINE AT THE NANTES CONGRESS LAST JUNE, HAS SO FAR REMAINED REASONABLY QUIET, PREFERRING NOT TO COMPLICATE MITTERRAND'S PROBLEMS, BUT NONETHELESS FAVORING NEW PS INITIATIVES. MITTERRAND'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON SEPTEMBER 28 WILL PROBABLY BE THE FIRST OFFICIAL INDICATION ON WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

6. REACTIONS IN THE MAJORITY: MAJORITY LEADERS CONTINUE TO BE SURPRISINGLY RESERVED, BUT PRIVATELY THEY VOICE A MIXTURE OF DISBELIEF THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS BROKE DOWN THE WAY THEY DID AND "I TOLD YOU ALL ALONG THAT THEY WOULD." GISCARD, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD, HAS ORDERED HIS MINISTERS TO ABSTAIN FROM MAKING ANY STATEMENT. WHETHER TO AVOID TAKING PUBLIC ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE SPECTACLE ON THE LEFT OR TO AVOID GIVING THE LEFT A COMMON RALLYING POINT, GISCARD IS FOR THE MOMENT CONTENT TO LET EVENTS ON THE LEFT TAKE THEIR COURSE. HE NO DOUBT BELIEVES THAT HIS LONG-HELD THESIS THAT THE PS AND PCF WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER IS LOOKING MORE PROPHETIC BY THE DAY. BUT HIS CAUTION SHOWS HE IS NOT JUMPING TO ANY QUICK CONCLUSIONS ABOUT A RADICAL REALIGNMENT OF ALLIANCES, NOTABLY THE CREATION OF A CENTER-LEFT EXCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS AND GAULLISTS. THE GAULLISTS HAVE BEEN ALMOST EQUALLY CIRCUMSPECT. FROM AN EARLIER LINE THAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PS AND PCF WERE MINIMAL AND THAT IN ANY CASE THE PCF WAS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT IN THE LEFT ALLIANCE, THE RPR SUSPECTS NOW THAT THE WHOLE BUSINESS MIGHT JUST BE A CHARADE, THAT THE LEFT STILL REPRESENTS THE GREATEST DANGER FOR FRENCH DEMOCRACY AND NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO LET DOWN ONE'S GUARD. RADICAL SOCIALIST SERVAN-SCHREIBER, IN THE

VANGUARD OF THE CENTER PARTIES, PRAISED THE SOCIALISTS
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FOR STANDING UP TO THE PCF AND HAS BEEN MAKING OPEN AND DIRECT APPEALS TO THE PS, IN ORDER TO BREAK FROM 20 YEARS OF "THE UDR STATE." JJSS MAY BE THE LONE WOLF AT THE MOMENT, BUT HE IS SAYING OUT LOUD WHAT OTHER CENTRISTS AND EVEN GISCARDIANS MAY BE THINKING FOR THE LONGER TERM, AFTER NEXT MARCH. THESE OVERTURES HAVE OF COURSE BEEN MET BY PS SPOKESMEN WITH CATEGORICAL REJECTIONS OF ANY ELECTORAL OR POLITICAL TIES WITH ANY MEMBER OF THE PRESENT MAJORITY. THE IMMEDIATE HOPE IS THAT OBVIOUS LEFT DISUNITY WILL TAKE ITS TOLL WITHIN AN

ELECTORATE WHICH NOW MUST BE UNCERTAIN AS TO WHAT SORT OF GOVERNMENT THE LEFT COULD OR WOULD PRODUCE. THERE ARE NO IMMEDIATE SIGNS OF SUCH AN IMPACT AND, ALTHOUGH SOME MAJORITY LEADERS TRIED TO DEMONSTRATE THE POINT IN SENATORIAL RESULTS, THERE SIMPLY WAS NO GOOD INDICATION EITHER POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY.

7. THE NEXT STEPS: QUIET CONTACTS AMONG THE 3 LEFT PARTIES HAVE ALREADY BEGUN, BUT ARRANGING ANOTHER SUMMIT WILL NOT BE EASY. THE TWO SIDES (THE MRG CAN BE CONSIDERED SADDLED UP TO THE PS ALLY NOW) HAVE TAKEN PUBLIC POSITIONS FROM WHICH IT WILL BE HARD TO BACK DOWN. THE PERSONAL ATTACKS OF THE LAST WEEK (PARTICULARLY BY MARCHAIS AGAINST MITTERRAND) AND THE RADIO AND TV APPEALS BY BOTH LEADERS TO MEMBERS AND ELECTORATES OF THE OTHER PARTY ONLY ADD SALT TO THE OPEN WOUNDS OF EACH PARTY LEADER. THE TWO SIDES HAVE SETTLED INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS OF SEPTEMBER 23 FOR A WHILE, AND THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS COULD LAST FOR WEEKS, EVEN LONGER. BOTH SIDES, BUT ESPECIALLY THE PCF, HAVE LAUNCHED MASSIVE EXPLANATION CAMPAIGNS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.
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TRY, WHICH COULD EASILY GO ON FOR WEEKS. THOSE OBSERVERS WHO WERE STRUCK BY THE AGGRESSIVENESS OF MARCHAIS' PUBLIC APPEARANCES BELIEVE THAT THE PCF MACHINE HAS BEEN PUBLIC APPEARANCES BELIEVE THAT THE PCF MACHINE HAS BEEN

PUT INTO ACTION AND THAT THE PITCH OF THE DEBATE WILL MOVE UP ANOTHER NOTCH. IT IS NOT TO BE EXCLUDED THAT SECOND-LEVEL NEGOTIATING TEAMS WILL BE ABLE TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN THE RESPECTIVE POSITIONS AND ORGANIZE ANOTHER SUMMIT. BUT ONE THING IS SURE. THE NEXT SUMMIT WILL HAVE TO BE PRECEDED BY AT LEAST A TACIT AGREEMENT, FOR THE LEFT, IF IT IS TO BE MORE THAN AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE, WOULD PROBABLY NOT SURVIVE A THIRD FAILURE.

8. LOOKING FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD, ONE CAN ASSUME THAT

ALL PARTIES HAVE NOW LEARNED THAT THE ALLIANCE IS TENABLE ONLY IF THERE IS A GENERAL EQUILIBRIUM OF FORCES, I.E., THAT WHAT THE PS GAINS ELECTORALLY WILL HAVE TO BE AT LEAST PARTLY COMPENSATED FOR BY CONCESSIONS TO THE PCF ELSEWHERE (IN THE ECONOMY, ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES, OTHE R?) WHICH WILL GUARANTEE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNISTS' MINIMAL PROGRAM. FOR THE MOMENT, IT SEEMS

UNLIKELY THAT THE SOCIALISTS CAN OR WILL MAKE SUCH CONCESSIONS; THUS THE REAL BURDEN FALLS ON THE PCF TO SOMEHOW RATIONALIZE A MORE MINIMAL "MINIMAL PROGRAM." JUST LIKE THE PCF, THE PS AND EVEN THE MRG ARE COMMITTED TO LEFT UNION THROUGH MARCH 1978, BUT LIKEWISE NOT AT ANY PRICE -- TO GO FURTHER IN SATISFYING COMMUNIST DEMANDS IS SUICIDAL ELECTORALLY AND INVOLVES MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE WHICH TAKE PRECEDENCE EVEN OVER LEFT UNION.

9. THE PS CONTINUES TO SINCERELY FAVOR A NEW COMMON
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PROGRAM IF ONE IS AT ALL POSSIBLE AND CERTAINLY FAVORS COMING TO POWER WITH COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION, THEREBY LINKING THE PCF INTIMATELY WITH THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE EXPERIENCE. IF A COMMON PROGRAM IS NOT IN THE CARDS, AN ELECTORAL UNION MIGHT STILL BE POSSIBLE; SUCH AN OPTION ASSUMES IMPLICITLY THAT THE PCF WOULD SUPPORT A PS/MRG GOVERNMENT, BUT NOT PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN THE ABSENCE OF A PROGRAM IT COULD TOTALLY ACCEPT. THE PS DOES NOT DISCARD THIS POSSIBILITY, BUT SEES THE OBVIOUS DANGER OF BEING DISCREDITED (THROUGH FAILURE) WITHIN THE WORKING CLASS AND THUS THROWING THE DOORS OPEN TO COMMUNIST ELECTORAL GAINS.

10. THERE REMAINS THE POSSIBILITY OF HEAD-ON COMPETITION, WHICH WOULD SPELL THE END OF LEFT CHANGES FOR 1978. REGARDLESS OF THE FINAL STRATEGY, WHAT BEGAN FORMALLY 5 YEARS AGO AND INFORMALLY 15 YEARS AGO AS A DEADLY COMPETITION FOR LEFT DOMINANCE WILL CONTINUE DURING THE REST OF THE CAMPAIGN, AS WELL AS IN AN EVENTUAL LEFT GOVERNMENT. THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS GIVE THE PCF ITS LAST GOOD CHANCE TO CORRECT THE IMBALANCE WHICH EXISTS AND TO DO SO BEFORE BEING LOCKED INTO A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS NO LONGER FAITHFUL TO ITS CONCEPT OF SOCIETY. THE PCF IS SHOWING ONCE AGAIN THAT QUESTIONS OF LEFT BALANCE AND COMPETING CONCEPTS OF FRENCH SOCIALISM ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT FOR ITS OWN SAKE. HOW MUCH MORE IMPORTANT IS THE QUESTION ALL F US ARE TRYING TO ANSWER.
HARTMAN UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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